

BELIEVERS BIBLE FELLOWSHIP  
August 25, 2013

Lesson No.9

The Book of Acts

Saul of Tarsus  
Acts 9:1-22



- His Background
- His Conversion
- His Spiritual Strength

Key Verses: Acts 8:1 And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

**I**ntroduction: Acts 8 is closely linked with chapters 6 and 7. The subject of persecution begun in chp.5 is continued in chp.8; great persecution followed Stephen's martyrdom. Jewish leaders approved of Stephen's execution. Israel was in the process of confirming its tragic choice to reject Jesus as their Messiah.

The Personality of Saul: The persecutor of the church who became the Apostle to the Gentiles.

1. His Background: Saul was native of Tarsus, and his father was a Roman.
  - He was a Pharisee by birth, and a Pharisee by belief.
  - He was a freeborn citizen of Rome; it had great significance.
  - He had a strict religious training; memorized Scripture, familiar with Jewish history.
  - He was a tent maker by trade; a father's command *"to teach him a trade"*
2. His Conversion: The conversion of Paul is the great turning-point in God's dealings with Israel. The whole program for the evangelization of the world depended on this unusual man. Click [Study of Galatians](#) to read more: Lessons No.1 Paul's Calling and his Missionary Journeys; Lesson No.3 Paul's Conversion.
3. His Spiritual Strength: Scripture reveals only about 5% of the Pre-Christian activities of Paul. Saul the persecutor became Paul the preacher.
  - He became a *"new creature"* in Christ Jesus. Paul never got tired of telling the story of his Damascus Road Experience. Acts 9:3-9; 22:6-11; 26:12-18
  - He was a great church builder. In all his travels, trials and triumphs, Paul was motivate by the incentive *"for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain"* [Philippians 1:21](#)
  - He wrote 13 New Testament books: subjects related to *"doctrinal and practical living"*

## Saul of Tarsus



I made my own independent evaluation of this man called Jesus of Nazareth: I investigated into his life to see if this leader of the Nazarene cult was worth following or not. I made my own independent evaluation of what He was worth. I was not unfair, I was not unkind; I applied to him all the normal, natural standards by which any life is evaluated, in any age. I used the normal standards for determining the worth of any individual at any time.

I looked into his ancestry and discovered there was a cloud over his birthright from the start. As I investigated it, it became quite clear that he was the illegitimate son of a faithless woman, who had been taken in by a kind-hearted carpenter and raised as his own son. But he was an outcast from the beginning, and socially he was worth absolutely nothing. I investigated his professional standing, and I discovered that he was born of peasant stock and had attended no schools. He was raised as a simple carpenter in a village of no standing in Israel, and professionally he was worth absolutely nothing.

As Saul of Tarsus, I investigated his theological and ecclesiastical background. I found that he had sat at nobody's feet; he had been to no seminary; he had had no ecclesiastical or theological training. In fact, he was repudiated by all the ecclesiastical authorities of his day. He was nothing but a street preacher and a rabble-rouser, and as far as his professional ecclesiastical and theological standing was concerned he was worth absolutely nothing.

Furthermore, I looked into his standing financially. I found he had no bank account; that he was born in a cave and laid in a borrowed manger and that he lived in other peoples' homes. He was a scrounger; he was always borrowing things. He borrowed money to pay his taxes, he borrowed his clothes from other people, he rode around on a borrowed donkey; he died on a borrowed cross, and was buried in a borrowed tomb. Financially, from the standpoint of accumulation of this world's goods, he was worth absolutely nothing. So as I investigated and applied to him the normal standards by which any life is evaluated, I discovered that this man, Jesus of Nazareth, was not worth following. He was worth nothing.

But on the Damascus road something happened. There, in the blinding flash of a moment, I looked into the face of a man, and I saw God. I discovered that he whom I thought to be worth nothing was the Lord of everything; that he was the God of glory, that everything that is made is upheld by the word of his power; that he is behind all things, and he is the very imprint and image of God. There I found that he, whom I thought to be nothing, was everything. In that moment I came to a tremendous reversal of all the values of my life. Later I learned that I, who was nothing, could be filled with him who was everything, and that would make my life something.